Saviour/Savior

God's Graceful Gesture

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Saviour/Savior: God's Graceful Gesture!

The word *soter* ("Saviour/Savior") occurs in the NT 24 times. It is first found in Lk. 1:47 (Mary rejoices in God as); 2:11(Jesus born as); Jn. 4:42 (Jesus of the world); Ac.5:31 (Jesus as Prince and); 13:23 (Jesus for Israel); Ep. 5:23 (the Church); Ph. 3:20 (from heaven); 1 Ti. 1:1 (God as); 2:3 (God as); 4:10 (God as); 2 Ti. 1:10 (Jesus as); 1 Jn. 4:14 (Son sent as of the world); Ju 25 (only God through Jesus).

The second most frequently found location of this word in the NT is 2 Peter: 1:1(the deity of Jesus as), 11 (Jesus Lord and); 2:20 (Jesus Lord and); 3:2 (Jesus Lord and), 18 (Jesus Lord and). These uses of the term *Savior* stand in stark contrast to the evil teachings by evil teachers being confronted in this letter.

The word *soter* ("Saviour") occurs in Titus more often than any other single writing in the NT: 1:3 (God as), 4 (the deity of Jesus); 2:10 (God as), 13 (the deity of Jesus as); 3:4 (God as), 6 (Jesus as). The reason behind this abundant use of the term in Titus seemingly lies in the fact that it was written to Titus who was located on the Greek island of Crete (Titus 1:5, 12; Ac. 2:11; 27:7, 12, 13, 21). Crete, of course, was the largest among many smaller Greek islands or islets in the Mediterranean Sea. Numerous archaelogical discoveries have found many evidences of numerous Greek deities and other strong religious flavors on this island.

Therefore, Paul's frequent use of this term in Titus seems perfectly pitched to proclaim that the God who became flesh and blood in Jesus of Nazareth was the one and only true deity or *Savior* in whom and from whom salvation is found or mediated. That is, He is the only go-between or Mediator between God and human beings. He alone provides or settles any questions about being the Connecting Link between God and people. His once-for-all sufficient sacrifical intervention for sins forever was a friendly, graceful gesture from God - not only on the Cross but also in Heaven itself where He subsequently sat down at the right hand of God to make continual intercession in behalf of His own:

> "Jesus remains a priest forever; His priesthood will never end. Therefore, He is able, once and forever, to save everyone who comes to God through Him. He lives forever to plead with God on their behalf. He is the kind of high priest we need because He is holy and blameless, unstained by sin. He has now been set apart from sinners, and He has been given the highest place of honor in heaven. He does not need to offer sacrifices every day like the other high priests. They did this for their own sins first and then for the sins of the people. But Jesus did this once for all when He sacrificed Himself on the cross. Those who

were high priests under the law of Moses were limited by human weakness. But after the law was given, God appointed His Son with an oath, and His Son has been made perfect forever" (Hebrews 7:24-27, NLT).

"So Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. He has entered that great, perfect sanctuary in heaven, not made by human hands and not part of this created world. Once for all time He took blood into that Most Holy Place, but not the blood of goats and calves. He took His own blood, and with it He secured our salvation forever.

Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a young cow could cleanse people's bodies from ritual defilement. Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our hearts from deeds that lead to death so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered Himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. That is why He is the One Who mediates the new covenant between God and people, so that all who are invited can receive the eternal inheritance God has promised them. For Christ died to set them free from the penalty of the sins they had committed under that first covenant.

Now when someone dies and leaves a will, no one gets anything until it is proved that the person who wrote the will is dead. The will goes into effect only after the death of the person who wrote it. While the person is still alive, no one can use the will to get any of the things promised to them.

That is why blood was required under the first covenant as a proof of death. For after Moses had given the people all of God's laws, he took the blood of calves and goats, along with water, and sprinkled both the book of God's laws and all the people, using branches of hyssop bushes and scarlet wool. Then he said, 'This blood confirms the covenant God has made with you.'

And in the same way, he sprinkled blood on the sacred tent and on everything used for worship. In fact, we can say that according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified by sprinkling with blood. Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins.

That is why the earthly tent and everything in it – which were copies of things in heaven – had to be purified by the blood of animals. But the real things in heaven had to be purified with far better sacrifices than the blood of animals.

For Christ has entered into heaven itself to appear now before God as our Advocate. He did not go into the earthly place of worship, for that was merely a copy of the real Temple in heaven. Nor did He enter heaven to offer Himself again and again, like the earthly high priest who enters the Most Holy Place year after year to offer the blood of an animal. If that had been necessary, He would have had to die again and again, ever since the world began. But no! He came once for all time, at the end of the age, to remove the power of sin forever by His sacrificial death for us. And just as it is destined that each person dies only once and after that comes judgment, so also Christ died only once as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people. He will come again but not to deal with our sins again. This time He will bring salvation to all those who are eagerly waiting for Him (Hebrews 9:11-28, NLT).
" But our High Priest offered Himself to God as one sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then He sat down at the place of highest honor at God's right hand" (Hebrews 10:12, NLT).

The hymnist, Philip P. Bliss, responded this way:

"Man of Sorrows! what a name for the Son of God who came
Ruined sinners to reclaim! Hallelujah, what a Savior!
Bearing shame and scoffing rude, in my place condemned He stood;
Sealed my pardon with His blood: Hallelujah, what a Savior!
Guilty, vile and helpless we, Spotless Lamb of God was He;
Full atonement! can it be? Hallelujah, what a Savior!
Lifted up was He to die, 'It is finished' was His cry;
Now in heaven exalted high: Hallelujah, what a Savior!
When He comes, our glorious King, All His ransomed ones to bring,
Then anew this song we'll sing: Hallelujah! what a Savior!"

There has not been and never will be another such graceful gesture from God.

How will we respond?